LEMIRE • DEODATO • MARTIN

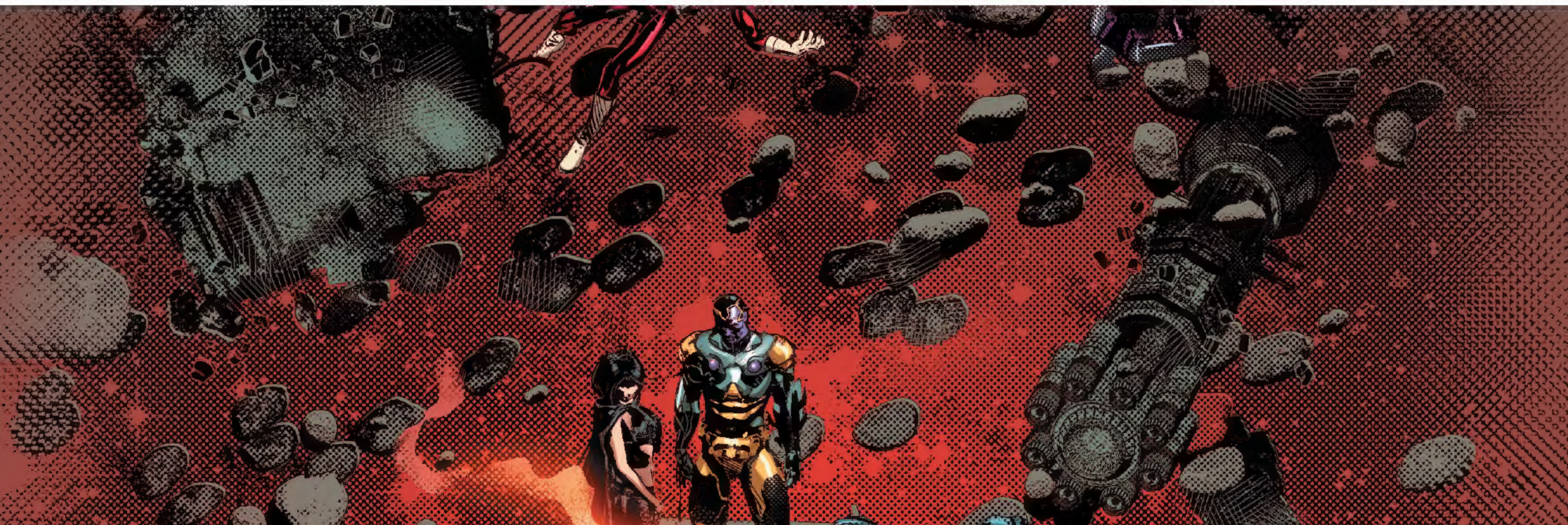
THANOS®

MARVEL

#5

A total obsession with power drives him — to control the forces of the universe.
He is the Mad Titan. He is...

THANOS



Thanos has been imprisoned. Though the elite Shi'ar Imperial Guard claim this victory, it would have been impossible, if not for the fact that the Mad Titan...is dying. His weakened state and manic search for a cure have left him more vulnerable than ever, and the Shi'ar are not the only ones in the galaxy hoping to take advantage. Thanos' son Thane has formed an alliance with Starfox, Nebula, and Tryco Slatterus — people with no common cause, except to kill Thanos.
But only Thane knows the true architect of their plans: Mistress Death.

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There is a prison that floats in deep space, far, FAR away.

This galactic gulag was constructed to hold the most dangerous prisoners in the universe. Its location was chosen due to its extreme distance from any colonized planets or sentient life.

The location of this prison is known only to the highest-ranked officials in the Shi'ar Empire. It was decided long ago that keeping it classified would reduce any rescue attempts.

The prison is rigged with a self-destruct fail-safe should any rescue or escape be attempted.

And deep at the core of this prison, there is a cell that is reserved for the **most dangerous** of the dangerous. Cosmic-level threats. It is here that the Shi'ar **Imperial Guard** currently stand sentry.

The Imperial Guard do **not** normally stand watch in this prison. But they all have a deeply vested **personal interest** in the newest prisoner.

The warden of this prison will tell you that, while the Imperial Guard does stand ready, they are not needed. His defenses and staff are more than sufficient for anyone and anything...even **Thanos.**

THE WARDEN WILL ALSO TELL YOU THAT IT IS HIS JOB NOT ONLY TO CONTAIN THESE PRISONERS, BUT TO ENSURE THEY NEVER POSE A THREAT TO ANYONE, EVER AGAIN...

...TO ENSURE THAT THE FIGHT IS GONE FROM THEM WHEN AND IF THEY EVER LEAVE THIS PLACE.

IN SHORT, IT IS HIS JOB TO **BREAK THEM.**

WARDEN DAAK, I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE THIS FOR YOUR **TROPHY ROOM.**

HEH. THE HELM OF THANOS. MOST EXCELLENT. THANK YOU, OFFICER GLYK.

CONTACT THE SHI'AR COMMAND. TELL THEM THAT WE HAVE COMPLETED OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE PRISONER AND THAT THEY CAN NOW STAND DOWN. TELL THEM TO CALL THE IMPERIAL GUARD BACK. WE HAVE THE PRISONER **FULLY** UNDER CONTROL.

ARE YOU CERTAIN, WARDEN? I MEAN, THIS IS TH--

I AM SURE! SEND THE COMMUNICATION NOW.

OF COURSE, SIR. RIGHT AWAY.

I DON'T THINK OUR NEW PRISONER WILL BE CAUSING US MUCH TROUBLE...

"...I DOUBT IF HE IS EVEN GOING TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT."

MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE GALAXY, A VISITOR IS ABOUT TO MAKE HIS PRESENCE KNOWN...

WHY WAS I SUMMONED?! I TOLD YOU FOOLS I WAS NOT TO BE DISTURBED. I HAVE *VERY SERIOUS* WORK TO ATTEND TO!

L-LORD TERRAX, THERE IS A SHIP APPROACHING. WE RECEIVED A HAIL REQUESTING PERMISSION TO COME ABOARD.

WHO? WHO WOULD BE SO *BOLD* AS TO SEEK THE AUDIENCE OF TERRAX?

HE SAYS-- HE SAYS HE IS *EROS OF TITAN.*

IF IT IS EROS, HE WILL SOON LEARN TERRAX THE TAMER DOES NOT SUFFER FOOLS LIGHTLY!

Y-YES, LORD TERRAX. H-HE WILL INDEED.

HELLO, HELLO! GREETINGS, TERRAX! I COME IN PEACE.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS, STARFOX? YOU AND I HAVE NO BUSINESS TOGETHER. TELL ME ONE REASON I SHOULD NOT BLAST YOU TO ATOMS WHERE YOU STAND.

OH, SUCH DRAMATICS, TERRAX! I COME ON A ***DIPLOMATIC MISSION***, SO PLEASE TELL YOUR FLUNKIES TO LOWER THEIR WEAPONS.

NOW THEN... I'VE TRAVELED A LONG WAY AND I AM THIRSTY AS A STAR SHARK. SO ***PLEASE*** TELL ME YOU HAVE ***WINE*** SOMEWHERE ON THIS FLOATING TIN CAN.

I WILL ADMIT, YOU DO HAVE AN IMPRESSIVE VESSEL, TERRAX.

SILENCE!

CHK

THAT FOOL COULD TALK THE PAINT OFF OF WALLS.

SHH! QUIET, TRYCO!

WHA--?!

DON'T WORRY. I'VE GOT--

UNGH!

--HIM.

WE NEED TO HURRY, TRYCO! TERRAX IS OCCUPIED, BUT STARFOX CAN'T KEEP TALKING FOREVER.

WE *ARE* TALKING ABOUT THE SAME STARFOX, RIGHT?

IF THIS SCHEMATIC OF TERRAX'S SHIP IS UP TO DATE, THESE SERVICE TUNNELS SHOULD GET US CLOSE TO WHERE HE IS HOLDING HIS PRISONER.

AND THIS PRISONER... HE KNOWS THE WEAKNESSES IN THANOS' DEFENSES?

YES. ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS HOPE STARFOX KEEPS TERRAX DISTRACTED LONG ENOUGH FOR US TO GET THE PRISONER OUT AND BACK TO THE SHIP.

IF HE DOESN'T, *WE'LL* BE LUCKY TO MAKE IT OUT OF THIS ALIVE.

REMEMBER WHAT'S AT STAKE HERE, NEBULA.

IF MY INTEL IS CORRECT, THIS PRISONER WILL HAND US A BACK DOOR RIGHT INTO THANOS' STRONGHOLD.

*LITTLE DO NEBULA AND TRYCO KNOW THAT THANE ONLY SPEAKS HALF-TRUTHS. SOON, HE WILL **BETRAY** THEM AND SET A COURSE THAT WILL RESHAPE NOT ONLY THEIR LIVES BUT THE FATE OF THE UNIVERSE ITSELF...*

...SOON, BUT NOT QUITE YET. SO NOW WE TURN OUR ATTENTION BACK TO THANE'S INFAMOUS FATHER, THE MAD TITAN HIMSELF...

SWIP

LOOK AT YOU. THE *GREAT* THANOS.

THE MAD TITAN. I MUST ADMIT I HAVE DREAMED OF THIS DAY...

...THE DAY THAT I, DAAK OF STRILLEN-6, WOULD HAVE THE *LIKES OF YOU* UNDER MY CONTROL.

SO YOU CAN IMAGINE MY *DISAPPOINTMENT* TO FIND YOU TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN A WEAK, DYING OLD MAN.

NO ONE KNOWS WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU. I DOUBT YOU EVEN KNOW. BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT, THANOS? NO ONE PARTICULARLY *CARES,* EITHER. THEY ARE ALL HAPPY TO SEE YOU *DIE IN PAIN.*

HOW DOES THAT FEEL? NOT TO BE FEARED AND REVERED, BUT TO BE PITIED?

KZZT

IT MAKES ME THINK ALL THE STORIES ABOUT YOU HAVE BEEN EXAGGERATED ALL THESE YEARS. YOU'RE NOT MUCH OF ANYTHING, ARE YOU?

THE ONLY THING I REGRET IS THAT I WASN'T THE ONE WHO GOT TO *BREAK* YOU.

DO YOU HAVE NOTHING TO SAY? ARE YOU JUST GOING TO LIE THERE AND DIE LIKE A SICK ANIMAL?

I WONDER, WHAT IS IT YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT AS YOU LIE THERE, THANOS?

THINKING? I WAS NOT THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING...ONLY *WAITING.*

WAITING FOR YOU.

ARRGHHH!

GAAH!

I KNEW IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL A LITTLE MAN LIKE YOU WOULD NEED TO MAKE HIMSELF FEEL BIGGER BY COMING TO LORD OVER HIS GREAT TROPHY.

I KNEW IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL YOU LET YOUR GUARD DOWN AND GAVE ME WHAT I NEEDED.

BLEEP

KZZZT

KZZZSSSSSSSSSSS

UNGH!

STOP! STOP RIGHT THERE!

KZZZT

ARRRGH!

GGK!

SCHLUNK

HRRN...

ALL RIGHT, THEN...LET US BEGIN.

AS THANOS PREPARES FOR ANOTHER ASSAULT, HIS BROTHER, EROS, ENGAGES IN A DIFFERENT SORT OF STRUGGLE...

THIS IS QUITE AN IMPRESSIVE VESSEL, TERRAX.

YOU ALREADY SAID THAT. THREE TIMES. NOW TELL ME WHAT YOU *WANT*, STARFOX.

WHAT DO I WANT? WELL...THAT IS A GOOD QUESTION INDEED, TERRAX. A VERY GOOD QUESTION.

I CAME TO WARN YOU OF A *GREAT DANGER.*

I NEED NO WARNING! ANYONE OR ANY*THING* FEEBLEMINDED ENOUGH TO CROSS PATHS WITH TERRAX THE TAMER WOULD SOON LEARN TO REGRET IT!

BESIDES, WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO WARN ME OF ANYTHING? WE ARE NOT, NOR HAVE WE EVER BEEN, ALLIES.

NO, WE ARE NOT. BUT THIS THREAT CONCERNS BOTH OF US, AND I THOUGHT PERHAPS WE COULD COMBINE OUR FORCES.

YOU *HAVE NO FORCES,* STARFOX! I AM THE ONE WITH AN ARMY. SO IT IS YOU WHO NEEDS ME.

NOW QUIT WASTING MY TIME AND GET TO THE POINT!

WASTING *YOUR* TIME?! YOU ACT AS IF I DO NOT HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO THAN TO STAND HERE TALKING TO YOU!

"I ASSURE YOU, TERRAX, I AM NOT HERE FOR MY GOOD HEALTH, AND THE LAST THING I WANT TO DO IS WASTE THE TIME OF AN IMPORTANT MAN SUCH AS YOURSELF."

I AM STARTING TO THINK THERE IS NO DANGER AT ALL. I AM STARTING TO THINK YOU ARE HERE UNDER FALSE PRETENSES!

FALSE PRETENSES?!

"WHAT IN THE MOONS OF TITAN COULD I EVER WANT FROM YOU, TERRAX?"

I WILL GIVE YOU *ONE LAST CHANCE* TO EXPLAIN YOURSELF.

"ALL RIGHT, VERY WELL. YOU HAVE SEEN THROUGH ME, TERRAX. I DO HAVE ULTERIOR MOTIVES FOR MY VISIT..."

THAT MUCH HAS BECOME OBVIOUS. NOT EVEN YOUR INFAMOUS SILVER TONGUE CAN *DECEIVE ME,* STARFOX.

DISTRACT ME?! DISTRACT ME FROM *WHAT?!*

OH, YOU ARE A SHARP ONE. AND I DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO DECEIVE YOU...ONLY *DISTRACT YOU* FOR A WHILE.

THOOM

ARRRRROOOOGGGDADADA

DISTRACT YOU FROM THAT.

PLUS, I MUST ADMIT I HAVE NEVER LIKED YOU, TERRAX, AND I WAS *JUST DYING* FOR A CHANCE TO DO THIS...

SMASH!

THIS IS IT! THE PRISONER SHOULD BE RIGHT IN HERE! WE NEED TO GET HIM AND GET OUT! *MOVE!*

WHAT THE BLAZES?!

HELLO, MY DEAR. YOU MADE IT JUST IN TIME.

I-- YES. IT'S--IT'S BEAUTIFUL.

I AM SORRY I HAD TO DECEIVE YOU. YOU NEVER WOULD HAVE HELPED ME IF YOU'D KNOWN WHAT TERRAX *REALLY* HAD.

AND I DID NEED YOUR HELP.

THANE... WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

WHAT HAVE I DONE? I HAVE FOUND THE ONE THING THAT WILL GIVE ME THE POWER I NEED TO DESTROY MY FATHER...

NOT JUST THANOS, MY LOVE...

...WITH THE PHOENIX FORCE, WE WILL KILL EVERYONE.

NEXT: FATHER VERSUS SON!

THANOS

Thanosthusiasts, are your minds sufficiently blown? We've been excited for the Phoenix Force reveal for a while, and Jeff's got great plans for what happens when two of the most formidable forces in the Marvel Universe confront each other. And wasn't it good to check in with Terrax? I like to imagine he still keeps a garden on his ship—Starfox did say it was a very impressive vessel.

I have been a Thanos fan for so long now. And with the coming of his battle in the MCU, it has been a great time to be ALIVE! But that word "alive" has me so intrigued on this recent journey in the ongoing THANOS comic. As soon as issue #1 ended with, "Thanos is dying!" even I was shocked and ready for this adventure! And now that issue #2 has been read, and Mentor defeated, this journey will be SO GOOD TO FOLLOW! So, keep it up! But as a huge Thanos fan...it can't end!!!...can it??? Give me words of encouragement that you'll be sure to fight your hardest and continue to be "THE MAD TITAN" until the end!!

B.Done
Brandon Blevins

Keep reading, B., because we're keeping it up for sure. And after seeing Thanos break out of an unescapable prison using nothing but brute force and will, you know he'll keep fighting until the end comes. IF it comes, I mean...or DO I?

Gentlemen,

Never in my life have I said this before: I feel bad for Thanos. You have made me feel bad for a man (or creature) that has totally destroyed everything in the universe. For a creature that loves death so much, Thanos rages against himself dying.

From a production standpoint, good lord, this is one beautiful book! Those inks are gorgeous and those colors pop while still looking grimy (like Thanos should look).

Until Captain Mar-Vell returns and has a child with the Scarlet Witch that becomes Doctor Druid, Make Mine Thanos (and Marvel).

Matt in Chicago

Matt, you haven't even seen the worst of it yet! Apart from being beautiful, Deodato and Martin's work on this book makes that level of sympathy for Thanos possible. They've managed to remain faithful to pure comic-book character design while putting everyone in worlds that look lived-in. Check out Thane in his operatic look from BLACK VORTEX in a dirty prison last issue, and try not to feel bad for that guy!

Hi team,

I am currently following your amazing run of the THANOS comic in which he is dying, I am very much enjoying this run.

Thanos is my favorite character you have, and his sheer power and anger is iconic to follow in the comics he appears in.

I just wanted to thank you for such great work. Mr. Deodato has done a fantastic job with the art!

The only thing I wish is that there was some rarer variant covers. Thanos has some great opportunities for some really epic collector covers and I wish I could see more!

Keep up the good work, and I look forward to seeing where The Mad Titan's story leads!

Thank you to all the team and I wish you all the best for the New Year.

Kind Regards,
Anthony Diment

I can imagine some (actually literally) epic variants for THANOS, too, Anthony. Luckily, the main covers are chock-full of intensity and galactic scope, but hopefully there will be space in the future for more artists to put their spin on Thanos.

Heeeey, awesome Marvel people!!

I'm contacting you from Bahrain, yes the same Bahrain from *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*

Second time writing to you guys, you did not publish my first letter but that's fine, I forgive you… Anyway, I'm here to state that I do not approve of the way you're portraying Thanos nowadays in your comics—I mean, have you even read the Starlin Thanos? That guy was a beast—he went head-to-head against the Champion while he had the Power Gem, but he needed guns to attack Earth and yet lost to a handful of Earth's mightiest? And now, even though he beat a Hulked-out Annihilus who eviscerated the Gladiator with no effort, Thanos lost to Gladiator easily in issue #3. Plus, didn't Starlin establish in his OGN trilogy that Lady Death actually does love Thanos, and is just trying to test him? All I'm saying is DC beefed up Darkseid and made him the powerhouse he is today, while Marvel kept nerfing Thanos instead of capitalizing on the upcoming movies and the threat he would be in said movies, especially when all that power has been established by Starlin ages ago when Thanos destroyed a planet in his first appearance against Drax! That is a huge epic feat I think Marvel need to take advantage of way more.

I won't only say "okay to print!" I'll say please, Marvel, I beg of you, print and reply to my letter in the pages of my most anticipated book every month: THANOS!!!

It would mean a lot to me.

It means a lot to us that an old-school Thanos fan like you is still reading, even if you're not totally on board with our portrayal of him. We are walking a tightrope every time we use Thanos. From a storytelling perspective, he's an appealing big antagonist—the kind of threat that works well at the end of an arc, when you need to have high stakes. But if the heroes win, that means Thanos loses. I think we've tried to make his defeats few and challenging, but I can appreciate your perspective. As far as issue #3 goes, man, Thanos is DYING from a disease Mentor couldn't figure out, and it still took the ENTIRE Imperial Guard to weaken him enough for Gladiator to beat him! Temporarily, it turns out! That seems pretty un-nerf-like to me! I hope you keep reading and let us know if Thanos gets tough enough for your tastes.

Dear Jeff, Mike, and the whole THANOS crew,

Hello all the way from Australia.

I just finished reading issue #3 and I can't believe how much I love this book (well, I can, but you know what I mean). The scene with Pip the Troll was great. His explanation summed up perfectly why Thanos is such an evil character. But he's more than just evil and I think you guys are bringing a new dimension to the Mad Titan.

I've always been a massive fan of Jeff's writing (and art) and I first came across Mike in NEW AVENGERS. He quickly became one of my favorite artists. You two are the perfect team for this title.

Keep up the good work; you will have me for the entire run!

Paul
Adelaide, Australia

Hello all the way from New York, Paul! Glad to hear THANOS is beloved on the other side of the world.

Hey guys,

THANOS is awesome! How about "Thanotes"?!

Keep up the good work!

Dave

Thanks, Dave! And thanks to everyone who's writing in and suggesting names for the letter column. "Thanotes" might be the one to beat! Keep it up, and tell your friends the good news about THANOS.

See you next month!

Kathleen

NEXT MONTH:

Send letters to **MHEROES@MARVEL.COM** or **135 W 50th St., 7th Floor, New York, NY 10020.** (Please mark **"OKAY TO PRINT."**)

ZONE